

Arts License Plate Supports Arts Programs

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Wayne Thiebaud, Northern California artist and educator

If there is one immutable rule living about in the Golden State, it is that Californians love their cars. People spend hours detailing their cars, designing the vehicle's identity, and creating the ideal artistic statement on wheels. Clearly, Californians are proud of their creativity and how the arts play an important role in their daily lives. So, it is not surprising that a specialty arts license that supports arts programs is the most popular plate, according to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Depicting a brilliant orange sun over a coastline lined with palm trees, the Arts License Plate was the first license plate in the nation solely designed to benefit the arts. Designed by noted California artist Wayne Thiebaud, the Arts License Plate has sold more than 112,000 plates since 1994 and generated more than \$6 million in revenue for arts education efforts and other local programs. Currently, revenue from plate sales funds the programs of the California Arts Council including arts education efforts for schoolchildren. At \$30 for standard and \$70 for personalized ("vanity plates"), thousands of Californians are branding their vehicles with an attractive, functional license plate as well as making an investment in the arts. (The CAC realizes \$14.63 on each plate order and \$15 on each plate renewal). It is with this commitment to supporting the arts that Californians are purchasing Arts License Plates.

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Unfortunately, when fiscal year 2003-04 budget cuts slashed the Arts Council's funding by 94%, the importance of purchasing an arts plate took on greater significance. In 2003, the California Legislature provided \$18 million for CAC programs; this year that amount dropped to \$1 million. As the 28-year old agency continues to meet its mission of advancing California through the arts and creativity, revenue from the sales of arts plates bolstered the agency. Perhaps as a statement to the stark climate of arts funding, sales of arts plates have increased as more California motorists become "licensed art lovers."

In these difficult times, you can make a difference and help support the arts, by purchasing the Arts License Plate you will be supporting arts programs in schools, neighborhoods, and communities. Your investment in the Arts License Plate is crucial to supporting programs for at-risk kids, seniors, and thousands of Californians. Order the plate online at <https://vrir.dmv.ca.gov/ipp/ippMain.jsp>.

Orders take between 6-8 weeks for processing, however, ordering online speeds processing time. For ordering information and Frequently Asked Questions, go to the Arts License Plate section of the CAC Web site. (www.cac.ca.gov).